Export House Status to Tourism Industry

1229. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to accord export house status to the tourism industry in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof with objectives to be achieved;

(c) whether relevant instructions in this regard have already been issued to States and Union territories; and

(d) if so, the names of tourism units in Andhra Pradesh to be benefited from this move?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Hotels, Travel Agents, Tour Operators, Tourist Transport Operators shall be entitled for recognition as Export House/Trading House/Star Trading House/Super Star Trading House vide Government of India, Ministry of Commerce Notification No. 33 dated 26.11.98. Consequently, they shall be entitled to such benefits as specified in Chapter 12 of the Handbook of Procedures (Vol. I).

(c) and (d) The benefits under the above Notification is applicable to the above mentioned Tourism Units located all over the country including Andhra Pradesh.

Development of Jatinga and Water Tourist Spot at Parimur in Assam

1230. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the famdus Bird Mystery at Jatinga and Water Tourist Spot at Parimur in the North Cachar Hills District of Assam;

(b) if so, the effective steps being taken by Government for development of Jatinga Bird Mystery and Water Tourist Spot at Parimur as Tourist Places;

(c) the details of proposals formulated and initiated by Government for the development; and

(d) the details of budgetary provisions made by Government for the said purpose during the Ninth Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. If the State Government wants to develop tourism projects in this area, it can prioritize these projects for Central assistance.

(c) and (d) Development of tourism is primarily the responsibility of the State Government. The Ministry of Tourism extends financial assitance to the State Governments on the basis of specific proposals, interse-priority and availability of funds. During 1997-98, an amount of Rs. 288.88 lakhs has been sanctioned to the Government of Assam. During the current financial year (1998-99), proposals have been prioritised for Rs. 397.00 lakhs.

Growth of Tourism

1231. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of international tourists that India has received during the last five years, has not shown any significant growth;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the tourists are charged more in India by tourism industry than their counterparts in other countries;

(d) whether any study has been conducted in this regard; and

(e) if so, the findings and steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) and (b) Total

number of foreign tourists who visited India during last five years are as follows:

Year	Foreign tourist Arrivals	%Change
1993	1764830	--
1994	1886433	6.9
1995	2123683	12.6
1996	2287860	7.7
1997	2374094	3.8

The international tourist arrivals in the country registered positive growth during each of the last five years.

(c) to (e) There is a perception in overseas markets that India is outpriced due to high rates of published tariffs in some of the hotels at Mumbai and Delhi. The prices in India for all other facilities availed by the tourists including internal transportation, restaurants, shopping, entry fee in tourist places, etc. are reasonable. However, no formal study nas been conducted in this regard.

Buddhist Tourist Circuit Train

1232. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Buddhist tourist circuit train organised by ITDC has not been successful during the inaugural run;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have any plan to make the tour more entertaining; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. It is true that the operation of the train has not been successful in the initial stages because the awareness about its operation has not reached the travel agents, tour operators and the intending users in India and abroad in full measure

(c) and (d) The Baudh Parikrama Train is supposed to provide a pilgrimage journey. The train journey is during the nights. The sightseeing tours are part of the day journeys in the pilgrimage package of Buddhist shrines.

Steps to Attract Foreign Tourists

1233. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state the steps taken to attract foreign tourists in India, especially in Kashmir?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): Government of India is giving special emphasis to the promotion of Tourism to India and to the State of Jammu & Kashmir through its 18 Tourist Offices abroad and through Indian Missions located overseas.

Offices of Foreign Missions in India are also regularly briefed by the State Government to remove misconceptions about Kashmir.

Ministry of Tourism, Government of India regularly organises familiarisation trips to various parts of the country for Media, Trade and journalists from overseas markets.

Officers of Ministry of Tourism who were recently posted in Overseas markets were given a familiarisation trip to the State of Jammu & Kashmir before their posting.

The J & K State Tourism Department is setting up a Web site on the Internet for keeping latest information about tourist facilities as well as arrivals available through out the World. Similarly, the Ministry of Tourism is also setting up a web site on India.

Expansion Plan of ITDC

1234. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether ITDC plans expansion despite impending sell off;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and